

## PARAGUAY

**Date of Elections:** February 11, 1968

### **Qiaracteristics of Parliament:**

Under the new Constitution approved on August 25, 1967, the Paraguayan Parliament (*Congreso*) will henceforth be bicameral, consisting of a Chamber of Deputies of 60 members and a Senate of 30, both elected for a five-year term.

On February 11, citizens went to the polls to elect their representatives to the two Chambers of the new Parliament, which was to begin functioning on April 1, 1968.

### **Electoral System:**

These legislative elections took place in accordance with the provisions of the new Constitution and with those of the Electoral Statute, adopted on July 8, 1960, and modified on September 23, 1965.

Under the Constitution and the Statute, the right to vote is exercised by Paraguayan citizens, without distinction as to sex, who have completed their eighteenth year and possess full civil rights, an exception being made, however, for those serving in the army.

Exercise of the right to vote is an obligation and failure to do so is penalized by law.

Paraguayans who are citizens by birth and at least 25 years of age are eligible for election to the Chamber of Deputies. For election to the Senate, the requirements are the same, but the minimum age is 40.

As in other Latin American Republics, legislative elections are held the same day as the presidential election. Two ballot papers are

issued: one for the designation of the members of the two Chambers and the other for the nomination of the Head of State. Deputies and senators are elected by a party-list system established for the entire country, set up as a single electoral college.

The distribution of seats in the two Chambers is carried out as follows:

- Two-thirds of the seats are attributed to the political party which has won the largest number of valid votes.
- The seats constituting the last third are distributed proportionally among the other parties. To do so, the total number of votes obtained is divided by the number of seats remaining to be filled. This quotient is then divided into the number of votes won by each party, thus obtaining the number of seats assigned to each of them. The seats which still remain to be filled after this operation are given to the party which has received the most votes.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:**

Four parties contested the elections, namely:

- the National Republican Association (*Colorados*), in power since 1947 under the leadership of General Alfredo Stroessner, re-elected to the presidency for a further five-year term on February 11, and of Mr. Juan R. Chaves;
- the Radical Liberal Party, one of the large traditional Paraguayan groups which had however been weakened by a scission in its midst in 1963;
- the Liberal Party founded, by Mr. Carlos Levi Ruffinelli, with dissident members of the Radical Liberal Party in order to present a list of candidates at the 1963 legislative elections, although opposition parties had refrained since 1950 from submitting candidatures at elections;

— the Revolutionary Party (*Febreristas*), more left-of-centre than the preceding groups, which is presided over by Gen. Rafael Franco.

There is also a Christian Democratic Movement, founded in 1960 and transformed in 1965 into the Social Christian Democratic Party, which refused to participate in the electoral contest. With the banning of the Communist Party, Marxist ideology is represented by two clandestine groups.

When the election returns were compiled, it was seen that the *Colorado* Party had greatly outdistanced its opponents. In accordance with the law, it was attributed two-thirds of the seats in both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, the remainder being divided up among the other parties as shown by the table given below.

Statistics:

Number of registered voters. . . . .	897,355
Voters. . . . .	649,045
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	6,421
Valid votes. . . . .	642,624

Political Group	Votes obtained	Number of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies	Number of Seats in the Senate
National Republican Association ( <i>Colorado</i> Party,) . . . . .	462,609	40	20
Radical Liberal Party. . . . .	140,398	16	8
Liberal Party. . . . .	27,909	3	1
Revolutionary Party ( <i>Febreristas</i> )	16,791	1	
		<b>(id</b>	<b>30</b>

\* In the previous Legislature, the *Colorado* Party occupied 40 seats and the Liberal Party 20.